

2017

19 August 2017, Saturday

This is a *Lasius niger* queen I captured during the 2017 mating flights. I placed her in a test tube on 8 Jul 17, 6 weeks ago. She laid eggs within a few days, which are developing nicely. I have fed her, which I don't normally do during this phase, hence her swollen abdomen, which you can see in the video on my [YouTube channel](#).

1 September 2017, Friday

The queen now has a few small cocoons present, and I expect them to eclose (hatch) within the next 7-14 days. Once that happens I will keep an eye on their growth and move them to a normal ant farm in due course. The queen is looking healthy and she should raise a successful colony. I've been feeding her ant jelly once a week, so she and her larvae have had an advantage over her wild sisters. I wonder how many more of her winged sisters from her parent nest have gone on to successfully create a new colony.

4 September 2017, Monday

On Saturday, I just happened to glance at the test tube housing this new queen, and thought I saw some movement behind her. On further investigation I was excited to see that her first worker has emerged. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZ9441HYz6c>

1 December 2017, Friday

My ants are currently hibernating. Therefore, no updates to this journal will be made until they awake in the Spring.

2018

My ants have woken up from their winter hibernation, or rather their 'semi-hibernation'. They didn't fully hibernate but rather they drastically reduced their activities, often staying within the nest and not feeding. The queen stopped laying eggs, and any present brood (larvae only) went into a stasis in which their development was 'frozen' or put on hold. This is normal behaviour.

Due to this semi-hibernation I stopped updating this journal, otherwise all you would have read, constantly, would be, not much activity today.

However, now that they are resuming their activities I am resuming my activity on these journals.

15 March, Thursday

I say that this colony hibernated, but to be honest, out of all my colonies this one hibernated the least. Whereas all the other colonies are situated in my Ant Room, which, by design, has no heating other than

natural sunlight heat. This colony remained on a shelf in my bedroom within their test tube. This test tube is dirty and so I have attached a clean test tube to it, with a cotton wool water wick. She has not moved into it but seems to prefer to remain in the dirty tube. Her tube is, and always has been, exposed to ambient light. I covered up the new tube, hoping the darkness might encourage her to move into it. But has she? Nope!

The queen laid no more eggs but she, and her two workers remained active. I continued to feed them during this period. However, it seems now that both workers have died, leaving the queen on her own. From previous experience, once a new queen loses her first few workers, without any other replacing them, she rarely survives herself. It will be interesting to see what happens to this colony.

13 April 2018, Friday

Still only one worker with the queen, and some larvae, which I hope will soon commence their development, if they haven't already. The queen looks healthy enough. I just wish there was more progress to report. Still, let's keep our hopes up for this colony.

Thank you for reading my journal. If you have any questions you can email me on myrm@antnest.co.uk

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